PATENT

ABSTRACT

A wide area network using the internet as a backbone utilizing specially selected ISX/ISP providers whose routers route AlterWAN packets of said wide area network along private tunnels through the internet comprised of high bandwidth, low hop-count data paths. Firewalls are provided at each end of each private tunnel which recognize IP packets addressed to devices at the other end of the tunnel and encapsulate these packets in other IP packets which have a header which includes as the destination address, the IP address of the untrusted side of the firewall at the other end of the tunnel. The payload sections of these packets are the original IP packets and are encrypted and decrypted at both ends of the private tunnel using the same encryption algorithm using the same key or keys.